

# Longacre's Ledger

*The Journal of The Flying Eagle and Indian Cent Collectors' Society*

Volume 20.3, Issue #80

[www.fly-inclub.org](http://www.fly-inclub.org)

December 2010



*The "Fake" Issue*



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That Will Scare You  
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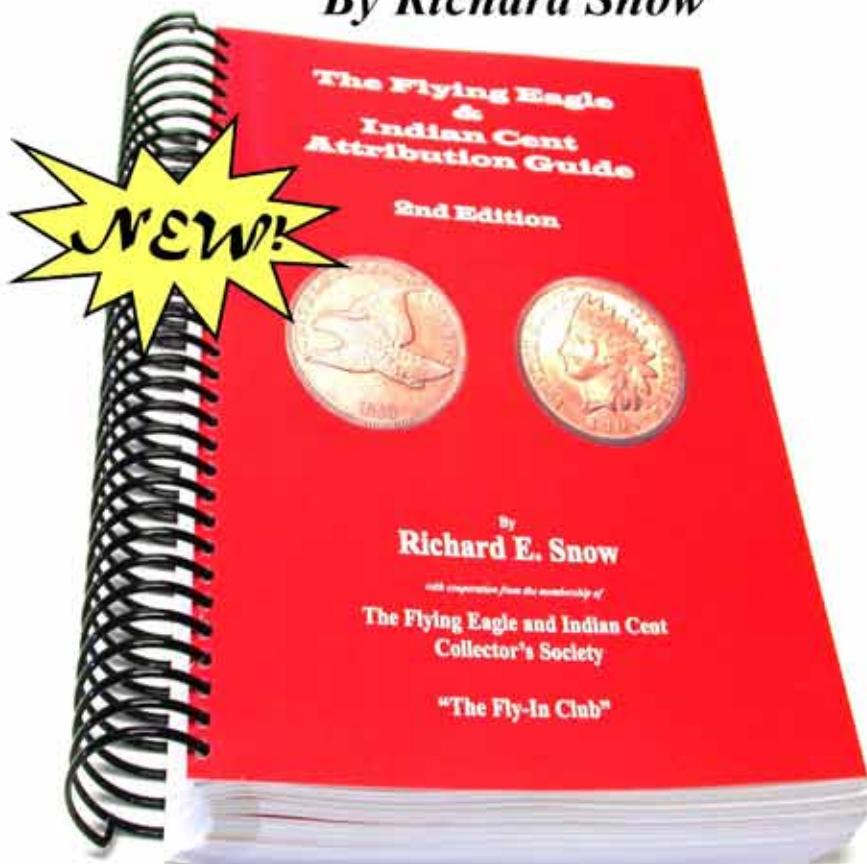
*The Mystery of the  
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# Flying Eagle and Indian Cent

## Attribution Guide

### Full volume 1856-1909

By *Richard Snow*



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# The Flying Eagle and Indian Cent Collectors' Society

Our mission is to gather and disseminate information related to James B. Longacre (1794-1869), with emphasis on his work as Chief Engraver of the Mint (1844-1869) with a primary focus on his Flying Eagle and Indian Cent coinage.

*Founded 1991*

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### On the cover...

This is a counterfeit 1876 Indian Cent. It is one that is so well made, it would fool most people, even knowledgeable collectors and dealers. Learn how to spot this and other counterfeits in this issue.

*Image by Rick Snow*

Special thanks to Heritage Auctions for printing this issue of Longacre's Ledger

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# Longacre's Ledger

## 2010 Vol. 20.3 Issue #80

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### Submission guidelines

If you have a substantive article you would like to contribute, please follow these guidelines:

- ✓ If you have internet access, you can send text to the editor's e-mail address below. Please send images in separate files.
- ✓ You may also send files and images on a CD-W disk or other storage device to the editor's address below. Storage devices will be returned upon request.
- ✓ Images of material can be made by the editor for use in the Journal. Please include the necessary return postage with the submission.
- ✓ Please feel free to contact the editor if you have any questions.

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### Submission deadlines

Please submit all articles, letters, columns, press releases and advertisements no later than the following dates to assure inclusion:

Issue	Deadline	Show issue
#81 2011 Vol. 21.1	.....March 1, 2011	.....CSNS 2011
#82 2011 Vol. 21.2	.....July 1, 2011	.....ANA 2011
#83 2011 Vol. 21.3	.....November 1, 2011	.....FUN 2012
#84 2012 Vol. 22.1	.....March 1, 2012	.....CSNS 2012

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## ***The President's Letter***

*By Chris Pilliod*

In my last President's letter I inserted a rather cryptic note about an unusual observation I had during a tour of the Mint buildings in Philadelphia and stated "more about something I noticed in my next President's letter." Several of you caught that in passing and emailed or asked what exactly was I talking about?

That letter detailed a walking tour I recently made when I visited Philadelphia. As you recall, the first and second Mint buildings no longer stand, only the third and the fourth ones are still extant. The third Mint building is now part of a Community College. Not much of aura of the third Mint building is left. The central foyer is intact but houses an art exhibit the students have assembled. The only remnant from the Mint in the foyer is an old balance beam scale used for weighing silver and gold planchets.



But it was in the hall leading into the foyer where I found myself captivated by a series of old photos from approximately 1900 exhibiting the third mint's workers in action. Then it occurred to me that the Great Earthquake of San Francisco, the Sinking of the Titanic, McKinley's assassination-- none of these had transpired at the time the photos were taken. The qual-

ity of the photos is excellent and I found myself mesmerized by the collection. I had seen them all before on several previous visits but they all still captivated me each time I viewed them.

Many, if not most, appeared to be staged... a few big bruising guys holding a vat of cleaning acid staring at the cameraman, a half-dozen gravely mustached-men working harmoniously elbow-to-elbow, something I haven't observed often in my mill career.

Although I had laid eyes on this one particular photo five or six times before, while I studied it intensely something this time in the annealing department caught the corner of my eye. Of all the photos,

and there are about 15 or 20 are hanging at eye-level in the hall, on this one I found myself standing on my tippy-toes jumping up and down trying to figure out what this photo was trying to tell me. After a few minutes a deep voice startled me from behind, "May I help you sir???"

I quickly turned around and faced a Security Guard in full dress uniform. He informed me that they had spotted some unusual activity on the surveillance cameras and were curious what I was up to.

"Ummm," I stuttered, "I'm just studying these old Mint photos."

"Is that right? We normally don't see that."

"Well, I'm a little different.

I'm really into old coins," I explained.

"Well, OK," he replied, "carry on."

The more I studied the more I became convinced it was something very simple and benign that I would fully expect to find in a production facility very much like where I toil, but yet also of extremely significant consequence.



In the bottom right hand corner of the photo blending in amongst some oil splatters and no more than six feet from one of the employees laid a blank planchet either preparing to be annealed or more likely a blank that simply fell out of an annealing tub coming out of a hot furnace. It appeared that the workers were entirely nonplussed by its existence to the point of it being commonplace, a “we’ll get it later” attitude.

But I got to thinking, well if it is an as-annealed blank, most likely it is discolored perhaps even lightly charred by the high-temperature annealing operation, and just what is going to happen to that blank? Well, with the possible exception of gold, I thought most blanks would discolor to the point of being unrecognizable between each other. Gold is extremely noble and may pass through annealing unaffected, resisting any effects of oxidation. But what if nickel, copper and even silver all turn black going through the annealing process? The edge won’t be reeded yet so except for diameter and weight annealed blanks will look pretty much the same. Especially if it dark inside the room, in the evening or nighttime.

And who does the cleanup in the room? The annealing officer? I doubt it. Probably some night watchman who cleans up on the side. And then what does he do with the blanks discovered on the floor? For the most part, surely nine out of ten times, maybe even 99 out of 100, the lost blanks find their correct home.

But what if a blank finds the wrong tub, what if that gold blank looks coppery after annealing with a quarter eagle blank almost identical to the diameter of a cent? I mean, a lot of numismatists think the reason most of the quarter eagle Indian Gold pieces struck in Denver were upset using cent upsetting roller dies. That’s the reason they display a ridge near the edge and the Philadelphia pieces don’t, Philly didn’t upset the blanks prior to striking.

This whole journey reinforced my belief that the wrong-planchet strikings we encounter in U.S. coinage is simply understandable misidentification by an honest hard-working employee at the Mint, perhaps someone in too big of a hurry to clean up and call it a day or a night watchman on his round trying to perform housecleaning. A handful of gold blanks in 1900 that looked coppery after annealing must surely find their proper home and not a scrap bucket. Why weigh them



when I’m sure they are copper blanks? In a career he or she may have picked up thousands of blanks laying on the floor, and what if just 1% finds their proper home for subsequent striking?

Thus the intrigue and lure of wrong planchet strikings in the Indian Cent series continues to appeal to the collector. Indian cents are known to be struck on the following blanks:

- 3c Nickel
- Half Dime
- Dime
- Quarter Eagle.

I’ll keep this President’s letter short as we have a great issue with lots of important Indian Cent counterfeit detection information. And I hope to see you in Tampa, Florida for the FUN Show. We have a Fly-In Club meeting scheduled for 1:00 p.m. on Friday January 7th, 2011. I’ll have a nice Powerpoint show on how die steels are made—you’ll enjoy it.

## Counterfeits That will Scare You

By Richard Snow

Counterfeit coin detection relies on a well-documented library of known dies, both genuine and counterfeit, to initially detect the fake coins. After a fake is discovered, it can be traced by its own die diagnostics against future examples that are questioned. The hardest part is identifying the well-made counterfeit when only one example is known.

Back in 2002 I wrote about a suspected counterfeit 1876 Shallow N that was found by Dr. Tim Larson on eBay.<sup>1</sup>

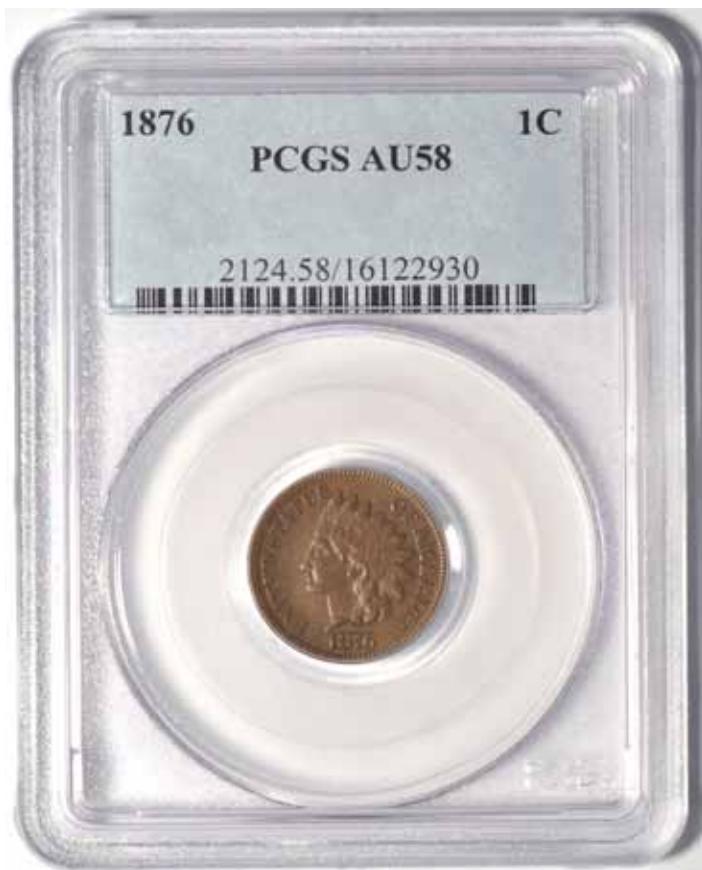
The coin was known to be counterfeit because it was a Shallow N reverse and none are known for that year with that reverse design. Knowing it was counterfeit helped, but we needed to know what the die markers were so that others could be identified

*1) Longacre's Ledger Vol 12.2 #52, June 2002*

with the same reverse. This is very important since the 1877 Indian Cent has a Shallow N reverse and if you can make a real-looking 1876, you can also make a real-looking 1877. So the search was on for another example of the fake 1876 Shallow N.

An example has finally been found by Dennis, a Fly-In member who is collecting the PCGS variety set graded by PCGS as AU58. The coin he found was sold on eBay. The interesting part of his find was that the new coin was in a genuine PCGS holder.

The fact that the coin is so well-made that it made it past the graders at PCGS is amazing! Dennis let me borrow the coin to educate the PCGS graders as well as the Fly-In Club members who attended the meeting at the ANA show at Boston.



*Counterfeit 1876 Shallow N Cent in PCGS AU58 holder.*



Please don't think that PCGS, or anyone for that matter, is above mistakes. However, once a mistake is identified, it is likely that the same mistake will not be made again. PCGS did offer to buy the coin for what Dennis paid. He politely declined, but he told them that he will never place the coin back on the market.

The real important thing was that now we could identify the repeating damage and document this fake for future authenticators. The reverse is the important die to make detailed notes on. We found a large repeating depression just above the inner olive leaf. This should be found on all examples from this reverse die, so it is important to make special note of it and compare it to all Shallow N coins you encounter.

I think there is no need to be scared, as long as you know what to look out for.



*Fake Shallow N reverse die marker*



*Two different fake 1876 Shallow N from the same dies*



*Fake 1869 Bold N with two different reverse dies*

Here are two 1869 fakes that are easy to tell as fakes only because they have the Bold N design which was not made until 1870. Aside from that they are very deceptive. The obverse dies are the same die but the reverse dies are different, which is most noticeable on treatment of the shield. What happens when these reverse dies are paired with a date that is known to have a Bold N?

There are a few die markers on these fakes. There are also die cracks and these can be used to

identify questionable pieces, but you can't use them to condemn a coin as fake based on them because these are elements that were on the original host piece and are not unique to the fakes.

The counterfeiter must artificially circulate the coins after striking, otherwise they look too good to be true. As a result most fakes look like they are very choice AU's with questionable color. The edges tend to be a bit more square than real coins.



*Fake 1869 #1 (on left on previous page) with repeating defects marked.*

On the obverse we find two repeating marks, one on the chin and one on the neck. These are very good identifiers, but they could easily be masked by artificially circulating these a bit more.

On the reverse we find two marks on the NT in CENT. These appear to be transferred marks and not marks to the coin.



*Fake 1869 #2 (on right on previous page) with repeating defects marked.*

On the second example we see the same repeating marks on the obverse.

On the reverse we see that the shield is bulging slightly more than normal, but this is transferred from the host coin and cannot be used to condemn a

suspected fake. The likely repeating damage is a small mark on the left edge of the shield.

Be sure to keep an eye out for both of these reverse dies on other dates.



*Fake 1871 Shallow N*

The last fake we'll look at is an 1871 Shallow N. The 1871 Shallow N dies are well researched and any newly discovered die is a big deal. This was originally thought to be a new die pair but was eventually determined to be fake. The die crack on the reverse will identify this die pair as it does not show up on any other 1871 Shallow N. Rather than a transferred die

crack, it appears to be a die crack on the fake die. It may show up on other coins, especially the 1877.

The obverse has a repeating mark on the neck that should be easy to recall.

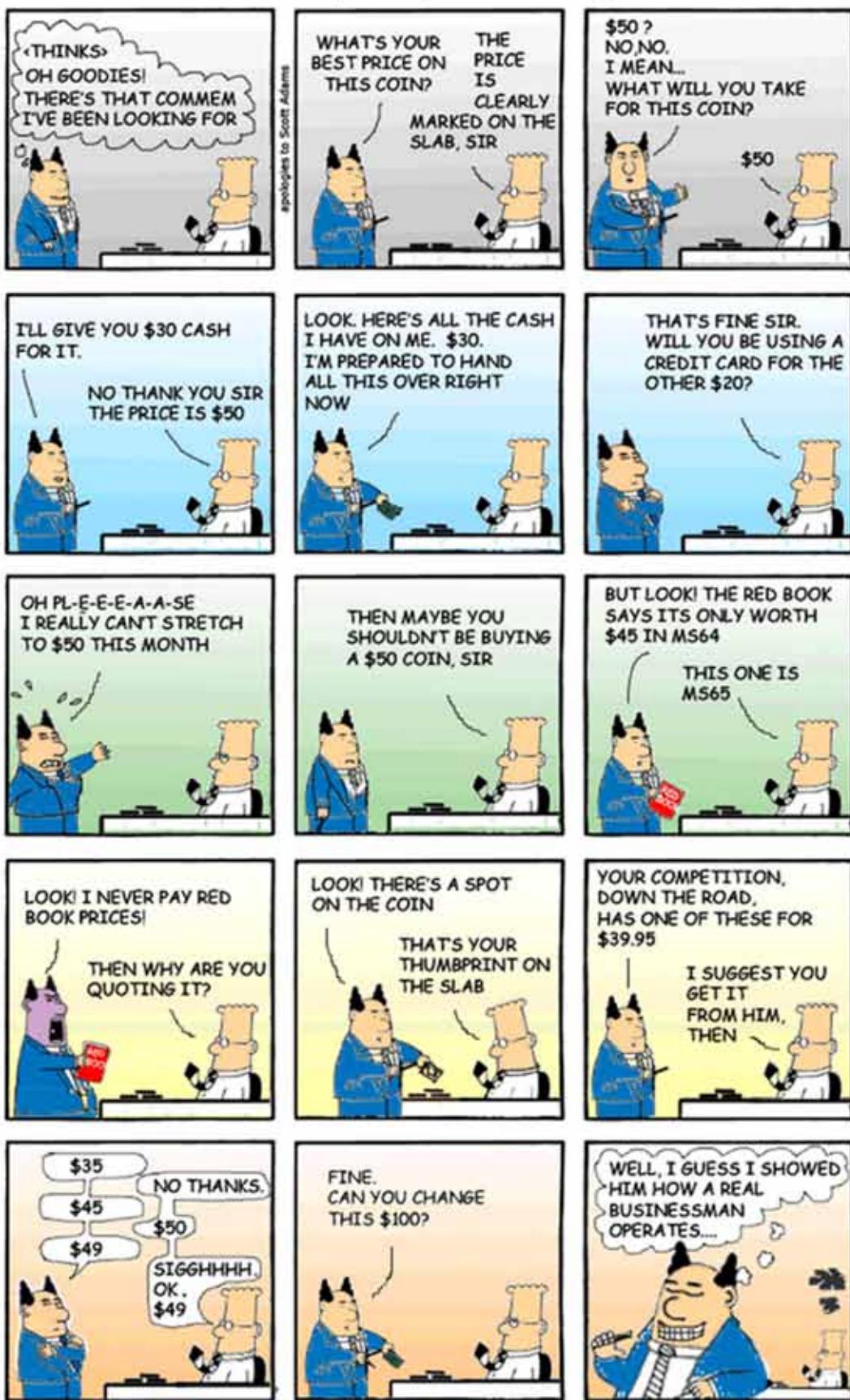


*Fake 1871 Shallow N with repeating defect noted on the obverse and die crack on the reverse*

## Coin Dealer War Stories

By Charmy Harker

### COINBERT and the pointy-haired negotiator



## What's a Dealer to Do? (Dealer War Story No. 1)

The cartoon humorously illustrates an exchange many dealers encounter at almost every coin show or coin shop. This customer/dealer interaction is only one type of scenario that I refer to as a dealer “war story.” In the legal field, we used the phrase “war story” to describe dramatic or contentious courtroom experiences or particularly frustrating or funny situations with clients or opposing counsel, etc. I also found this apt definition on the internet:

*A recounting of a memorable personal experience, especially one involving challenge, hardship, danger, or other interesting features.*

I know many of you collectors have had uncomfortable or unpleasant experiences when buying coins from a dealer at a show or at your local coin shop. Sometimes it makes you question whether you should continue in this hobby since these experiences can bring frustrations and even anger that you might feel are just not worth it. Well, of course, let me say that I personally love coins and wouldn't want to have to give them up, even for the (thankfully) far-and-few-between unpleasant people I encounter as a dealer – both collectors and other dealers!

So in the next few issues of Longacre's Ledger, I'd like to relate some stories about my experiences with a few disagreeable customers that will perhaps let you to see things from the other side of the table and at the same time allow me an opportunity to “vent” just a little and perhaps even elicit a little sympathy!

When dealing with all my customers, I always keep in mind that I am offering a service to collectors and my goal is to maintain good relations by making sure they are satisfied with the coins they buy from me. And when I encounter a difficult customer, no matter how strongly I may want to tell them how I feel about their bad behavior, I bite my tongue and try to behave professionally and courteously at all times. However, there have been times when I seriously wanted to let lose a few unlady-like explicatives, lock up my cases, take my coins, and just go home! Or when dealing with someone by email, I have had to step away from my computer, go make a rum and coke, turn on some good ol rock and roll, and deal

with the situation tomorrow when hopefully it won't irk me so much. By the way, don't worry, I will not disclose names and certain details so as to maintain anonymity.

So here's my first war story – I'll call this one:

### *“Mr. Impatient”*

Let me begin with a little historical background. Mr. Impatient had bought some coins from me over the past couple years with no issues at all. Then one day I happened to win a coin he was selling on an Ebay auction. I promptly sent my PayPal payment, received the coin a short time later, no problem. A couple days after I received the coin, Mr. Impatient sent me a message through Ebay asking me to leave feedback. I responded that I would be happy to do so, however, I explained that it was my practice to leave feedback in bulk a couple times a month and that it might take a week or two, but I would get to it.

Two days later out of the blue, he sent me another message informing me that, since I wouldn't leave him immediate feedback, he had “blocked” me as a bidder on his future auctions. “Wow,” I thought, “this guy was pretty impatient and in my opinion was ‘cutting off his nose to spite his face.’” I could understand blocking a bidder because they didn't send payment, or took too long to send payment, but I'd never heard of someone blocking a bidder just because they wouldn't leave prompt feedback. “Oh well,” I said to myself, “he's not the kind of guy I'd want to continue doing business with any way if that's all it took to get him peeved.”

Ok, fast forward a year later. Mr. Impatient saw a coin on my website he wanted to buy and emailed me asking for my best price. Well, I am taken aback to hear from this guy. If it was me, and I felt strongly enough to actually bar someone from bidding on my coins, you can bet I wouldn't want to do any kind of business with that person. But I thought, hey, let bygones be bygones, and decided to forget about the past incident and I gave him a reduced price for the coin.

He agreed to buy it, but then began asking for “extras” like wanting a larger photo of the coin, could I send the coin to Rick Snow to Photo Seal, and a couple other “special requests.” I emailed him that he



could enlarge and copy the photo off my website, and I also offered as a friendly courtesy, that since I would be seeing Rick at an upcoming show, I could hand the coin to Rick at the show, thereby saving Mr. Impatient the to/from shipping costs, however, he'd still have to pay Rick's \$15 Photo Seal fee. He said ok and mailed a check.

In the meantime, since Mr. Impatient knew who had taken the picture of my coin (I'll call him "Mr. Photo Guy"), Mr. Impatient contacted him directly and asked Mr. Photo Guy to send him a larger image (even though Mr. Photo Guy did accommodate Mr. Impatient, I personally thought this was out of line since Mr. Impatient was asking Mr. Photo Guy (behind my back) to spend his time editing the photo to suit Mr. Impatient without even offering to compensate Mr. Photo Guy). "Hmmm," I thought, as a little warning bell began to ring and I started to feel I should have declined to deal with this guy from the beginning.

Shortly after that, Mr. Impatient decided he didn't want to wait for me to take the coin to Rick but instead requested that I mail it directly to him. Well, Mr. Photo Guy still had the coin in his possession and was going to bring it to the same show Rick and I were attending, so now I had to ask Mr. Photo Guy if he would ship the coin to Mr. Impatient for me and I would reimburse him. "No problem," Mr. Photo Guy said so I gave him the address and he shipped the coin by insured first class to Mr. Impatient for me. I then contacted Mr. Impatient to advise him that Mr. Photo Guy would be shipping the coin to him directly.

A week later (on a Friday), Mr. Impatient (who lived across the country) emailed me that he had not yet received the coin. I was in my car driving to a coin show at the time I received his message on my Blackberry (my son read it to me), so I had to contact Mr. Photo Guy and ask him if he would respond to Mr. Impatient's email with the shipping date and tracking information, which he promptly did letting Mr. Impatient know that no tracking information was available at that time.

The next day (Saturday) while I'm at the show, I got a very rude and condescending email from Mr. Impatient questioning my professional reputation, asking why I did not respond to him personally about the coin's whereabouts, that even though Mr. Photo Guy contacted him, why didn't I care enough about his concerns to reply myself, etc.

"Wow," I thought, "This guy really did have some issues." Ok, I'll admit that I probably could have replied directly to Mr. Impatient letting him know Mr. Photo Guy would follow up with shipping status, but since I was driving at the time I thought asking Mr. Photo Guy to respond was the most expeditious way of handling his request.

So I bit my tongue, swallowed the unlady-like words I wanted to type, and responded professionally explaining to him that I was driving at the time I received his message, Mr. Photo Guy had the information, that the post office was pretty slow lately, that I was sure the coin would arrive within a couple days, but that the coin was insured and he should try and be a little patient. He replied the next day, without any apology for his nasty email, stating that he would wait and be hopeful. I was later informed the coin finally arrived two days later on Monday.

The icing on the cake of this story is that I later learned (not from Mr. Impatient, but from a third party) that on the SAME day Mr. Impatient sent me his ranting email (Saturday), he had received a pink slip from the post office letting him know they tried to deliver the coin but that no one was home, and they would try again on Monday! "OMG!" is all I could say when I learned this. After all the hubbub trying to track the coin -- the emails, my phone calls with Mr. Photo Guy, all of the worrying about the coin, etc. -- why didn't Mr. Impatient send me (and Mr. Photo Guy) a message letting us know that the coin was waiting for him at HIS post office -- not to mention a kind apology would have been appreciated!

And the story doesn't quite end here. After Mr. Impatient got the coin, he sent me an email letting me know he was quite pleased with it but also wanted his \$15 Photo Seal fee returned. (I had planned to use it to reimburse Mr. Photo Guy for the shipping fee.) Again, I was shaking my head that, after all this guy put me and Mr. Photo Guy through, he wasn't through "badgering" me.

Of course, I could have simply just refunded him the \$15 and avoided all further conflict and put an end to the whole deal, but I was finished bending over backwards and couldn't let this pass. So I sent him an email reminding him that I had to reimburse Mr. Photo Guy for shipping the coin to him. He responding saying that he didn't feel he had to pay any shipping fee since he felt the original (reduced) price I quoted him

for the coin should have included the shipping fee. I reminded him that my website clearly states the buyer pays for all shipping costs, and besides, we had never even gotten to the point of discussing the amount of the shipping since I had (graciously I thought) offered to hand carry the coin to Rick. He said that I should do whatever I felt was fair, so I did! After paying Mr. Photo Guy what I owed him, I refunded Mr. Impatient a few dollars and, for my own sanity, I promptly ceased all further communication with him. Geese, some people.....

Stay tuned for the next installment of Dealer War Stories:

### “Mr. Fickle”

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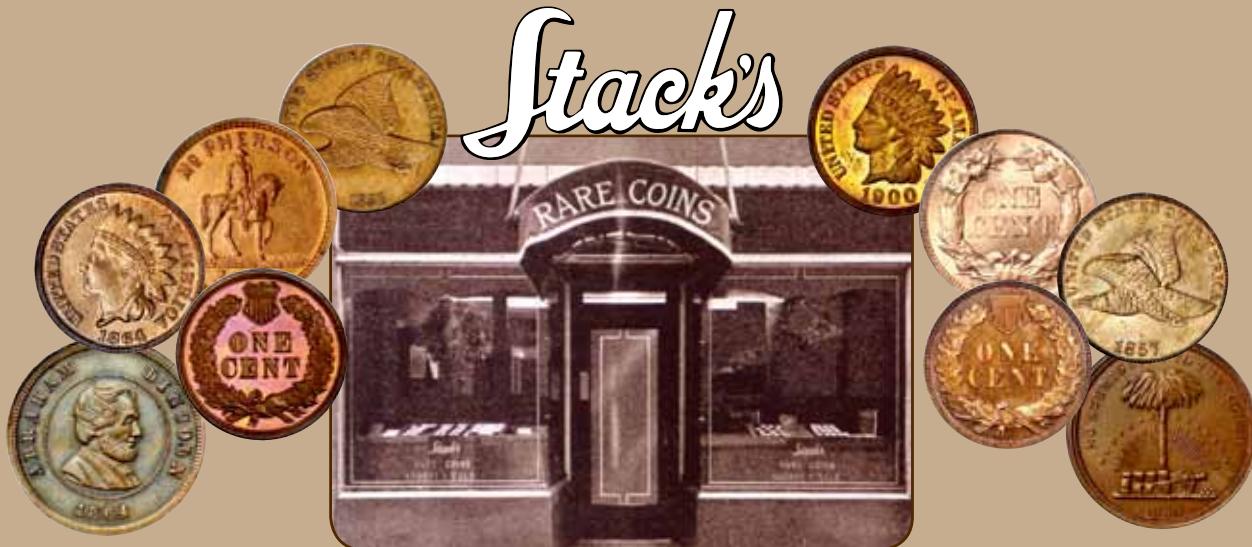
Member Talk

Topics

Topics	Replies	Author	Views	Last Post
Announcement: WHITESPACE LOCATION	1	admin	107	Sun Jun 07, 2009 7:36 pm admin • 0
Announcement: Passwords	5	admin	182	Mon May 25, 2009 10:23 pm admin • 0
Announcement: Any problems? Contact me!	0	admin	39	Mon May 25, 2009 4:17 pm admin • 0
Announcement: Where to obtain FE & BIC Attribution guides	0	admin	121	Sun Nov 04, 2007 7:16 pm admin • 0
Sticky: Club Librarian	4	calendane	61	Sun Mar 22, 2009 3:16 pm admin • 0
Sticky: Members Census info is up on our site. [ Go to page 1, 2, 3 ]	42	admin	1596	Sun Jun 14, 2009 1:15 pm admin • 0
MPD's, Which one?	4	lourso	47	Thu Nov 26, 2009 2:22 pm lourso • 0

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## *Authenticating 1877 Indian Cents*

*By Richard Snow*

Would you buy this 1877 Indian cent? It's certified by ANACS and graded MS-61. Sounds like an easy \$4,000 coin. Unfortunately, this coin is counterfeit. You would know this if you read Longacre's Ledger, so I bet none of you were fooled.

Why is it so easy to spot as a counterfeit? Well, first off, it has the Bold N reverse. We all know that

the MS 1877 Indian Cents all have the Shallow N reverse.

But, it could be a Proof, right? Sure, all the Proofs of 1877 have a Bold N. You knew that too. But it is not a Proof either.

So why is it so easy to detect it as a counterfeit 1877 Indian Cent? Read on.....



The 1877 Indian Cent is the stand-out rarity of the series. It is also one of the most counterfeited coins in all numismatics. Luckily, I have found that it is also one of the easiest coins to authenticate.

As I mentioned in the opening, all 1877's struck for circulation have the Shallow N reverse. All Proof 1877's have a Bold N reverse. No exceptions. This fact alone will eliminate 90% of all questionable pieces. If you get to know the diagnostics of the genuine 1877 cent you should be able to confidently authenticate nearly any specimen you are shown.

There is only one reverse die used in 1877, and every single one ever seen has at least one clash mark above the O in ONE. This angled mark is transferred from the chin and neckline of Lady Liberty from the obverse die. In later die states, a few more are found, but there is always at least one.

Other diagnostics can be used to confirm the die as well. The shield points and the olive leaf are distant from the denticles. These distances vary from die to die. If a different die is used to make the fake, it might have these points connected to the denticles.

Done!

We'll if you need to, you can also check the obverse die too. There are two dies known and they are also very easy to distinguish. The trouble is that a transfer-die counterfeit is usually transferred from a real coin, and the obverse has to be made from a real 1877-dated coin. Any diagnostics I tell you about can be copied. The reverse can be copied from a real 1877 too, but that cuts into the counterfeiter's expenses, so he likely won't use a real 1877 for the reverse.

Both obverse dies have the base of the first 7 slightly below the base of the 18. The second 7 is slightly lower than the first 7. Die pair 1, or Snow-1<sup>1</sup> has the 18 in the date nearly touching. There is always die file marks off the first feather to the last S in STATES. Later die state pieces show a die crack from the U in UNITED to the rim at 6:30. This die pair is typically weak on the right side. This is due to skewed dies, or dies that were not parallel.

1) Flying Eagle and Indian Cent Attribution Guide 1870-1889,  
Richard Snow 2007.



*Clash mark on the reverse of all 1877's*



*Snow-1 obverse diagnostics*



*Snow-2 obverse diagnostics*

The other obverse, Snow-2, shows the 18 in the date slightly separated. It has a small die dot on the neck by the middle hair curl. Later die states have a die crack that forms below the 1 and grows progressively until it reaches the denticles at 5:00. Later die states also have a die crack through the tops of TE in STATES.



*Snow-2 obverse diagnostics*

There is a possibility that the Bold N 1877 you are authenticating is a Proof. A few circulated Proofs exist. These can be authenticated by knowing what the Proof die diagnostics are. The coin pictured below is one such circulated Proof 1877.



*1877 Proof with circulation wear.*





1877 Snow-PR1 (Obverse 1)



1877 Snow-PR1 (Reverse 1872A)

There are two die pairs of the Proof 1877 Indian Cent. The easiest die to identify is what is known as the “Bulging T” die. It is classified as 1872A because it is a die that is used for regular-issue Proofs starting in 1872. The right pennant of the T is bulging out much higher than the rest of the letters. If you see this, it is likely a Proof and genuine.

In my book, I list three die pairs, but S-PR2 seems to be either a very rare die pair or a mistaken description of S-PR3. I have yet to get a picture of one. So we won’t worry about it for attributing Proofs. If you find one that matches the listing in my book, let me know.

The Snow-PR3 has a bold die dot on the neck just to the left of the junction of the hair curl and lower ribbon. This is easily visible and should be the diagnostic point for this



1877 Snow-PR3 (Obverse 3)



1877 Snow-PR3 (Reverse T3-B)

So, now compare the originals to the best fakes out there. The one that made it into the ANACS holder has the S-PR3 obverse die with the die dot on the neck. The reverse is the give-a-way. There are die clash marks on the right side that do not show up on any 1877 Indian cents. That should have gotten your attention right away.



The second fake is another really well made example, but the dies are aligned with a medal turn, like Canadian coins. It also is a Bold N. The obverse is also made from S-PR3. See the die dot? But the clash mark on the reverse though the C in CENT is not found on any 1877 Indian cent. That clash was transferred from the forehead of Lady Liberty.



Sure, these are deceptive fakes. The counterfeiters are getting better too! The Chinese fakes are not as good as these - yet. It is very important for everyone to be active in identifying fakes and the people who sell them. When you see them offered for sale, you must make sure it is known to the seller so that they can't get away with selling fakes. If sellers receive too much condemnation, maybe they'll think twice when selling fakes - whether on eBay, at a country auction, flea market, or even encapsulated as real.

*The Mystery of the Copper and Silver 1863 Cent Errors*  
By Richard Snow



Lot No. 2091

**UNIQUE UNPUBLISHED 1863 PATTERN CENT SET**

**2091 1¢ 1863 Set Three.** (1) Copper, no L, wt. 51.6 grains, dies aligned normally (unlike the usually seen J-299, which weighs 48 grains and has dies head-to-head); **double struck Obv., the two strikings about 10% apart; rev. die breaks rim r. of shield & rim to top arrowhead.** (2) Silver uniface trial of same Reverse, wt. 38.4 grains. (3) **Bronze** uniface trial same Rev., wt. 48.0 grains. **Last two unpublished;** first unpublished as double striking. First Obv. Unc. / Rev. Proof, irregularly toned: other two Brilliant Proofs. First similar to five other copper strikings seen (wts. 51.0 to 76.7 grains). An extraordinary set, proving that even in so well explored a field as this there are still major new discoveries to be made! As a set, **UNIQUE.**

*Kagin's ANA Auction, 1977, lot. 2091*

Here is an unusual set of pattern cent errors. They were sold in the 1977 ANA auction by Kagin's for an astounding \$3,500! Imagine what great coins \$3,500 could have bought you in 1977. I attended that sale, but don't recall much about these pieces.

I later came in contact with these coins in 1991 while I was finishing my first book, *Flying Eagle and Indian Cents*. These presented an attribution challenge. Knowing much more in 1991 than I did in 1977, I started to analyze these curious coins.

One of them is off-center about 10 degrees and double-struck on the obverse only. This is unusual, although not unknown.<sup>1</sup> The other coin is blank on the obverse with a pronounced wire rim. Both are copper or bronze.

1) Some 1854 Large Flying Eagle patterns were double-struck and show evidence of the second strike on the reverse only.

Some differences from the normal J-299 copper 1863 are noted. The J-299 Patterns are usually struck in a medal alignment. The coins in question (at least the one with a double-struck obverse) are struck in the coin-turn alignment.<sup>2</sup> Both pieces were struck with the same reverse. This die has curious die damage.

There is a large die gouge from the rim at 1:00. This is not found on other J-299's so it shows that these might be struck with discarded dies, possibly many years after the date on the coin.

There is a flat mark on the left leg of the N in ONE. This looks like a hit to the coin. But the curious thing is that it is on **both** examples!

2) Coin-turn is when the dies are aligned top-to-bottom. Medal-turn is when the dies are aligned top-to-top.



*Copper 1863 Double-Struck on the Obverse only*



*Copper (1863) Blank on the Obverse only*



*Die gouge at 1:00 and flat mark on N on both coins*

**Possibly Unique Die Trial**



1543 (1864-1909) Indian cent reverse die trial. Bronze. MS-62. 47.9 grains. Diameter: 0.751 inches. Mostly brilliant with bluses of blue and violet. The blank side has a prominent wire rim indicating that a blank die face may have been employed in striking. We have records of reverse Indian cent die trials on copper-nickel, nickel, silver, and aluminum planchets, but this is the first we have seen or heard of struck on a bronze planchet. A prize for the connoisseur of the unusual.

*Uniface bronze piece B&M "Lexington" #1543*

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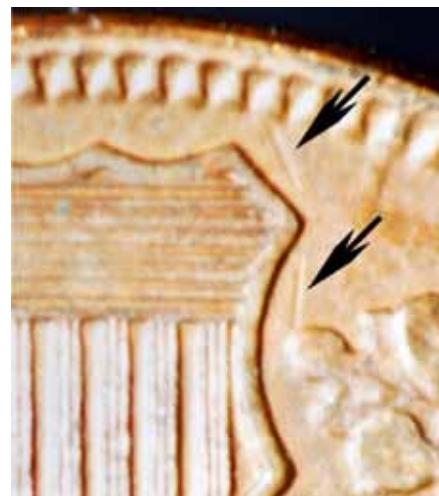
Two years later another blank obverse piece, this time in silver, was presented in the 1993 ANA auction, lot 8038. The coin was brought to me after the sale to see if I could tell what date it was. I recognized the marks on the reverse and was able to say that it was an 1863. This coin also showed the die gouge and the flat mark on the N.

Again in 1994 another bronze uniface was offered for sale in Bowers and Merena's "Lexington" sale in January, 1994, lot 1543. It sold for \$2,090.

The mystery deepened and the main puzzle was how the flat mark on the N got there. A mark on the die will leave a raised mark on the resultant coins. The flat mark on the N would have to be raised on the die and couldn't be die damage. It could be transferred from a punch or master die, but that is highly unlikely. The only answer that explains the anomalies is:

***They are all counterfeit!***

The mystery was solved in 1996 when a dealer offered me the same double-struck example I saw in 1991 with the uniface example offered with it. Having two examples together gave me the opportunity to draw better conclusions. I noticed that both coins had a small scratch to the right of the shield. The repeating damage was a clear sign that they were indeed counterfeit. The flat mark on the N now made sense - it was also damage to the original coin that used as the transfer model.



***Scratch found on both examples seen***

## ***Looking Back Twenty Years***

***by Larry R. Steve***

It has been quite some time since I've last written an article for the Ledger. There have been simply too many other events in my life that have preoccupied my time. First and foremost, there was the birth of our first granddaughter, Lily Victoria Sieck, who is now a precious and precocious two-year old. Then there was the new business that my wife runs, which we opened four years ago and is just now turning a comer (how timely for us to open, with the ensuing downturn in the economy a year and a half later - although the drop in the market and the downturn were not entirely unexpected by me). And, of course, I still maintain my retirement administrative and consulting practice that keeps me busy (part of my work involves independent research, analysis and valuations, which gave me a heads-up in early 2006 as to the then-looming financial crisis, with deeper issues to follow and as of yet to be addressed - but that's another subject for a different audience.)

Nonetheless, I have managed to attend a few coin shows now and then here in Maryland - the last being the Whitman Show - and to stay in touch with a few individuals. One person, Rick Snow, reminded me that the Fly-In Club is reaching a major milestone with its twentieth anniversary! He asked if I would write an article reflecting on the days that led to the formation of the Club. How could I refuse, the Club is near and dear to my heart. Twenty years, wow it's hard to believe!

Interestingly, as a collector, not only do I collect coins themselves, but I have maintained a file of my numismatic correspondence throughout all these years. I spent a few hours rereading some of the earlier letters which I will share with you. The first letter I'd like to share is dated June 18, 1990 and is addressed to Kevin J. Kilroy of Barrington Rare Coins. I chose this letter because it's a good representation of the genesis of the Club. It also contains a few other little tidbits, some of which I had forgotten, including the bizarre weather occurrence we had here in Maryland on June 8th and 9th 1990 .

I actually began collecting MS Indian cents in 1988 with the original goal of assembling just one complete set; well matched in terms of color and strike (full feather tips, full shield lines and visible veins in

the leaves). I knew very little about die states and next to nothing about die varieties. That all soon changed when I bought Breen's and The Cherrypicker's Guide, and later joined the Combined Organization of Numismatic Error Collectors of America (CONECA). I also bought other out-of-print previously published books that had any reference to Indian Cents. I even ordered copies of every single article about Flying Eagle and Indian Cents that had ever been published in The Numismatist from the library of the American Numismatic Association. Still, all this was not enough.

I had stumbled upon a wide open world of die varieties, far beyond, and in some instances equally (if not more) impressive than those few varieties I was previously aware of, having been listed in the "Red-book." I wanted to, needed to, know more. I feverishly began a telephone and writing campaign seeking more information wherever any could be found. I wrote to dealers and collectors alike, at least those who were offering Indian Cents for sell. I was seeking out, and later suggesting the formation of, a specialty club for the series.

Kevin Kilroy, one individual to whom I wrote (a copy of the letter herein reproduced), provided me with a copy of a booklet by Otto C. Steinberger. It appears to have been written sometime during the 1940's or 1950's and was not exactly a comprehensive study. It was, however, another piece of the puzzle and was graciously welcomed. (I am certain that I have retained this booklet, but have not yet located it. If anyone should be interested, let me know and I'll make arrangements to send you a copy, once located.)

The listing and descriptions of the coins in my collection at the time, which was attached to the letter, reveal a few other details about this aspect of the hobby. To begin with, the heading of the list itself: "Error/Variety Collection." Up until that time, and for some time afterward, errors and varieties were lumped together in the same general category; while today they are recognized as separate and distinct areas of interest. There remain some individuals who will argue that a die variety is an "error," with the foundation of their argument centering on whether or not the repunching (or whatever differentiating die characteristic) was "intentional." We now generally accept that

these die changes were intentional, but with a much different standard of quality control during the time these coins were minted than the standards of today. The key aspect of differentiating the two areas is: die varieties are replicated from images on the dies themselves during the minting process, whereas error coins are as a result of some other process and not replicated in the same manner.

Another aspect of the list reveals the readiness of others, including myself, to accept prior research; the 1869/8 Breen # 1978 being a prime example, now debunked. Such debunking could not have occurred except through a collaborative effort. This was part of my interest in forming a Club, to have the ability to compare notes with others and to form a consensus - even if it was contrary to the then-accepted "opinion." The list also shows that initial research can be wrong, including my own, such as the 1858/1858 which turned out to be "machine doubling."

At the time of the letter, I had about 90 MS coins in my collection, with some duplicates. I began to formulate a system or method of identifying date positions. Although my initial efforts were rather crude, over time and through the Club, a better method was developed. I had not yet fully appreciated that the position of a date on the coin was also a die variety. This recognition and appreciation would come many years later as my knowledge and understanding grew along with my collection. In particular, the 1864-L is of such significance that I later acquired more than two dozen MS pieces with nearly all of them having a different repunched date; only 3 or 4 of them did not and only

differed in their date position. These differing date positions on the 1864-L should be listed as die varieties, if for nothing other than to have a finished body of work for this date.

There are many other such letters in my files that I may share. In rereading some of these letters, the single most notable observation that I can make was the genuine interest in collecting and the willingness of others to share in their knowledge. The pre-Club period from 1988 through 1990 was hectic and heady. We had embarked on a journey that has taken us all to where we are today, with a new found sense of the joy of discovery and a true appreciation for this series. It is worth noting that each of these coins are now more than 100 years old! ... Let's stop and reflect on that for a moment ...

Explore and enjoy.

June 18, 1990

Mr. Kevin J. Kilroy  
Barrington Rare Coins  
P.O. Box 366  
Barrington, Illinois 60011

Re: Indian Head Cents

Dear Kevin:

Last week, I received the two Indian Head cents that I had recently ordered from you. Both coins are exceptionally nice; I especially like the 1873 Closed 3.

There are a number of reasons why I am writing to you. You mention that you are a small cent specialist, while I tend to specialize in Indian Head cents. At this point in my collection I am primarily interested in RPMs, repunched dates, overdates and other die varieties. I thought that I would first share with you a list of those varieties presently in my collection, some of which are new unlisted discoveries by me. A copy of this list is enclosed.

The second reason why I am writing is to ask if you know of any Flying Eagle/Indian Head Cent Collectors Club, that which is similar to the Early American Coppers and the Lincoln Cent Society.

Next, I couldn't agree with you more that there should be a MS-64 listing in both the Coin Dealer Newsletter and Coin World Trends. In fact, I feel that there should be a listing of Flying Eagle and Indian Head cents by date in the Certified Coin Dealer Newsletter. There is such a vast price difference between MS-63 and MS-65's that many collectors, such as myself, opt for the MS-64 grade. I feel that the MS collector falls somewhere along these lines:

MS-60 to MS-62	Novice	Inexpensive
MS-63	Beginner	Inexpensive to moderately priced
MS-64	Intermediate	Moderately priced to expensive
MS-65 or better	Advanced	Expensive to overpriced

Finally, there are a few dates in my MS-64 set of Indians that I am trying to improve upon and a few varieties that I would like to add to my Error/Variety Collection. I've previously given you a partial list of the varieties that I am looking for; I'd also like to examine a number of coins dated in the 1900's for other varieties - particularly 1901 through 1907.



June 18, 1990

Kevin J. Kilroy  
Page 2

As to the non-variety dates (MS-64 or better, virtually full red), following is a list of those dates that I need:

1858 LL	1867	1888
1858 SL	1868	1890
1864 CN	1875	1891
1864 BZ	1878	1892
1865 Plain 5	1885	1897
1866	1886 Type 1	

With the exception of the 1858 LL, I have all of these dates in my set. I'm trying to improve on the color and prefer a "golden" red as opposed to a "red" red - trying to have a well matched set; I'm sure you know what I mean. I'm in no hurry, so please don't go out of your way to try and find all these pieces - I couldn't buy them all at once anyway.

In addition, I have many duplicates graded MS-63 or better that I may wish to trade or sell (approximately 50 with about 40 different dates). If you're interested, let me know and I'll prepare a list for you. I would consider trading for pre-1934 Mercury dimes MS-63 or better FSB.

Thanks. I've enjoyed sharing my views, opinions and knowledge with you. I hope this letter has been interesting.

Sincerely,

Larry R. Steve

LRS/  
Enclosure

P.S. We had two days of severe storms here on Friday and Saturday, June 8th and 9th, with several small tornadoes. Over 500 trees were felled with some damage to several buildings. This has been completely unheard of here in Maryland for over fifty years - most unusual. Nonetheless, Sunday was an absolutely perfect day and the fiftieth wedding anniversary for my wife's parents was a success - nearly 100 guests.

Thanks again and take care.

Error/Variety Collection

1857 Dbl Die Obv	AU-55	Dramatic doubling of Eagle's Eye Cherrypickers #002, Picture
1858/1858 SL	XF-45	First date punched slightly to the left
1858/1858 LL	VF-25	Very similar to 1858/1858 SL
1858 SL Open E	MS-64	Breen # 1933, Picture
1858/7	AU-58	Breen # 1931, Picture
		Later stage of die, horn of 7 is visible, diagnostic evidence
1863 Dbl Die Rev	MS-64/63	Minor doubling, noticeable along lower right edge of shield, arrow feathers and tips.
		An interesting obverse "Flying E" The upper left serif of the E in STATES pointing slightly toward the rim
1865 Fancy 5	MS-64	Breen # 1963
1866/18-6/6	MS-63+	Actually an 1866/6 with the first 6 clearly punched high
		A closer examination shows that the 1 was first punched extremely low, the upper serif can be seen far below the serif of the final 1
		Minor repunch on the 8 can be seen inside the upper loop
		The second 6 can be seen above lower loop, best view upside down
1866/18-6/6	MS-63	Similar to above, although the second 6 is more difficult to see
1866/18-6	MS-64	Similar to 1866/18-6/6 above, but without the first punched 6
1867/18-7	MS-64	Similar to 1866/18-6 above
1869/8	MS-64++	Breen # 1978

1870/18-- MS-63 Minor repunch, First 1 and 8 punched slightly above and to the left

1873 Closed 3 MS-65 Breen # 1985

1874/4 PF-64 (Not yet received and examined)

1880/1880 PF-63 (Not yet received and examined)

1882/88- MS-63+ Dramatic repunched 8's. Upper loops of both 8's look like eyes one third closed

On many of the dates between 1883 and 1895 that I have examined, I've noted that the positioning is such that the 1 is directly under the point of the bust with the third digit of the date being positioned under the end of the ribbon. I've classified this as a Normal Date position and refer to it as a Type N.

On several dates, a distinct and repeated variation has appeared; the 1 is positioned to the right of the point of the bust and the ribbon is positioned over the space between the second and third digit. I've classified this as a Centered Date position and refer to it as a Type C.

1884/88- PF-63 (Not yet received and examined)

1884 Type N (Left) MS-64 The position of the 1 is far left of the point of the bust

1884 Type N MS-64++ Normal Date position

1885/8-5 PF-63 Minor repunch, 8 inside lower loop, 5 on lower part

1886 Type II/C MS-64 Breen # 2009

1886 Type II MS-64 (Not yet received and examined)

1888 Type N MS-63+ Normal Date position

1888 Type N (High) MS-64 The date was punched too high, the 1 touches the point of the bust

1888 Type C MS-64 Centered Date Position

1890/1890 MS-64 Dramatic doubling of date, not sharp through, may have been polished or possibly a triple date, difficult to determine.

1894 Type N MS-64+ First date punched too low, Top portion of first 0 seen protruding from inner sides of second 0

1894 Type C MS-64+ Centered Date position

1895 Type C MS-64 Centered Date position

1896/6 MS-63/64 Repunched 6 is clearly visible inside upper part

1898/98 MS-64 Best to view this date upside down, 9 & 8 clearly repunched on lower part, 8 inside lower loop

1899/8-9 MS-64+ Last 9 strongly repunched inside lower part, 8 repunch visible inside lower loop

1899/7 MS-64++ Breen # 2033, Picture

1900/1900 MS-63/65 ANACS Color Cert. Most evident to the left of the 9 and first 0

1909-S/S VDB MS-64++ First S is clearly visible in upper loop and in the southeast corner of lower loop of final S

# 1858 Large Letters

## S18 1858 LL, High Leaves.

### Doubled die obverse.

*Obv. 18: (RE) Minor doubling on the RICA of AMERICA as well as the tail of the eagle.*

*Rev. TI-L: E in ONE fully closed. Die polishing inside the bow fills the left side and half of the right side.*

*Attributed to: Matthew Chapman*

Very similar to S17. The date position is different.

{65}



*1858 LL S18 Doubled die obverse.*

# 1862

## S3b 1862, Bar under 2.

*Obv. 13: (C) There is a raised area under the 2 digit. Die polish lines below the ear. All A's in the legend are filled.*

*Rev. L: Olive leaf and shield points away from denticles. Die crack from the denticles at 12:00 through the right shield into the wreath. Die crack from the denticles at 2:00 into the wreath.*

*Attributed to: Scott Krezinski*

This is a second die with the digit defect which confirms that this is indeed a digit punch variety. As such it will show up on a few different dies. The cause is nothing more than the digit punch not being raised enough.  
{63}



*S3b 1862, Bar under 2.*



# 1866

## S10 1866, 1/1 (e).

*Obv. 11: (B) Minor repunching on the upper right side of the 1. Die crack from the denticles at 6:30 to the 1 in the date, continuing to the portrait. Die crack from the denticles at 12:30 to the second feather. Radial die cracks at 3:30, 5:00, 7:30, and 10:00.*

*Rev. K: Olive leaf and shield points well away from the denticles. Heavy radial die cracks from the denticles towards the center of the die at 3:00, 7:00, 9:00 (developing into a retained cud) and 10:30.*

*Attributed to: Thomas DeLorey*

The repunching is very minor but the variety may be rare as both dies were heavily broken on the discovery example. The variety originally listed in Snow 2003 was found to be a duplicate of S6.



S10 1866, 1/1 (e).

# 1874



S7 1874, Die chip on neck.

## S7 1874, Die chip on neck.

*Obv. 8: (LE) Large die chip on the neck. It is shaped like a tear drop.*

*Rev: T3-G: Shield points and olive leaf are away from the denticles.*

*Attributed to: Norman Thomas*

It is unclear if this die chip is a misplaced digit or some die flaw. {15, 15, 8}

# 1883



S15 1883, 83/83 (s).

## S16 1883, 8 in denticles.

*Obv. 21 (RH) The top of an 8 digit is visible in the denticles below the second 8 in the date.*

*Rev. U: Olive leaf and shield points connected to the denticles.*

*Attributed to: Norman Thomas*

Another prominent misplaced digit. {20}

# 1897



S24 1897, 897/897 (e).

## S24 1897, 897/897 (e).

*Obv. 25: (C) Minor repunching mostly visible on the 8 inside both loops. Very small areas of the 9 and 7 show repunching.*

*Rev. AA: Olive leaf and shield points away from the denticles.*

*Attributed to: Cecil Crews*

The repunching is wide, but visible near the center of the digits. {64BN}

# 1901



S24 1901, "Whiskers" variety.

Longacre's Ledger Vol. 20.3

## S24 1901, "Whiskers" variety.

*Obv 28: (B) A die flaw under the chin of Lady Liberty looks like whiskers. Die break on the eighth feather.*

*Rev. AB: Shield points just touch the denticles. Olive leaf just away from the denticles.*

*Attributed to: Scott Krezinski*

A die flaw in a very obvious place. {64RD}



S24 1901, Die chip on 8th feather.

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